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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a counseling model for providing comprehensive counseling and student services to adults. This proactive counseling model emphasizes the need for counselors and teachers to reach out to meet the needs of adult students. Specific counseling suggestions are presented in each of five areas: (1) intake-orientation, (2) placement and diagnosis, (3) instructional implications, (4) pre-post student disengagement, and (5) innovative functions of the counselor. Implications for local education agencies are discussed. The appendices contain a "Student Services Counseling Model for Adults," an outline of the model components, and a format to assess the need for training in counseling and student services skills. (NRB)

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A STUDENT SERVICES/COUNSELING MODEL

FOR ADULTS

Marc J. Potish

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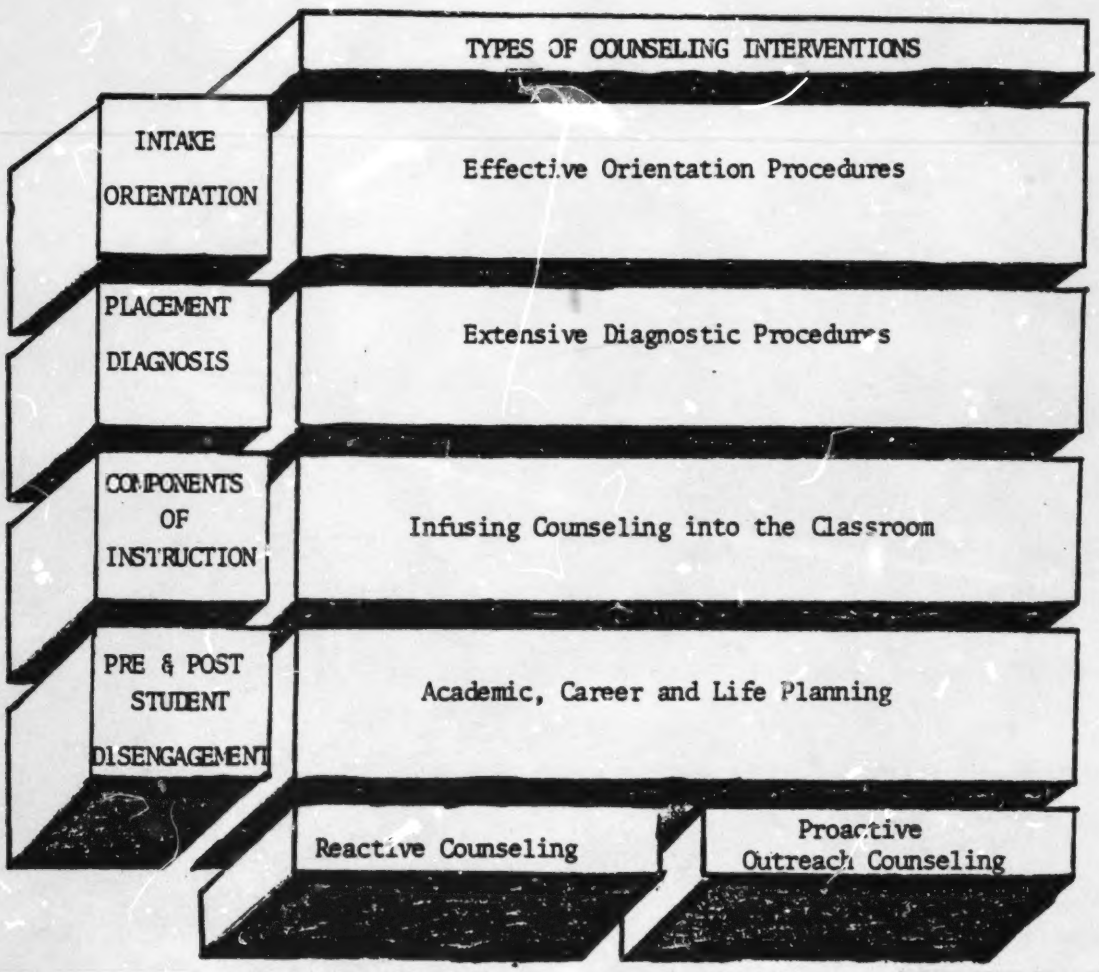

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A STUDENT SERVICES/COUNSELING MODEL FOR ADULTS

Suggestions for Providing Comprehensive Student Services in Adult Education Programs

Marc J. Potish

This paper describes a counseling model which provides a framework for delivering comprehensive student services/counseling for adults. The model expands the traditional reactive concept of counseling. Counseling/student services should not be provided only by a counselor in an office waiting to be approached by a student.

Although this kind of one-to-one counseling is helpful when a student has a specific problem, it does not meet the counseling concerns of many adults. By developing more "proactive" approaches to providing student services, programs can:

(1) reach out to a greater number of adults,
(2) provide services to students before a concern becomes a greater problem,
(3) help increase the retention of students,
(4) save time for teachers and staff who often engage in haphazard "counseling",
(5) often help to solidfy the motivation of students to return and stay in school, and
(6) provide more comprehensive, effective, and efficient student services.

Proactive/outreach counseling should be provided by teachers, counselors and others teaching courses or lectures on the special needs of adult students (i.e. - low-self-esteem, career counseling). Preventative counseling may include distributing counseling information or packets on selected special needs of students.

The model encourages the counselor/helper/advisor/teacher to reach out to adults, adequately assess their needs, and develop intervention strategies and programs to meet these needs. Appropriate referral information and alternative methods of implementing student services are important in providing comprehensive counseling to adults.

An attempt was made to consider the present status of counseling services in adult education (A.E.) programs and to develop suggestions which would expand these services. Some adult education programs are more involved in various elements of the model. A program, however, should evaluate their counseling/student services with respect to the model, and implement specific elements on a gradual basis.

It is hoped that the counseling model will provide suggestions for adult educators to expand the counseling/student services to adults. The suggestions presented in each component are not all inclusive but provide some specific ideas.

COMPONENTS OF THE MODEL

The model will discuss the following components:

1. Intake/Orientation
2. Placement/Diagnosis
3. Instructional Implications

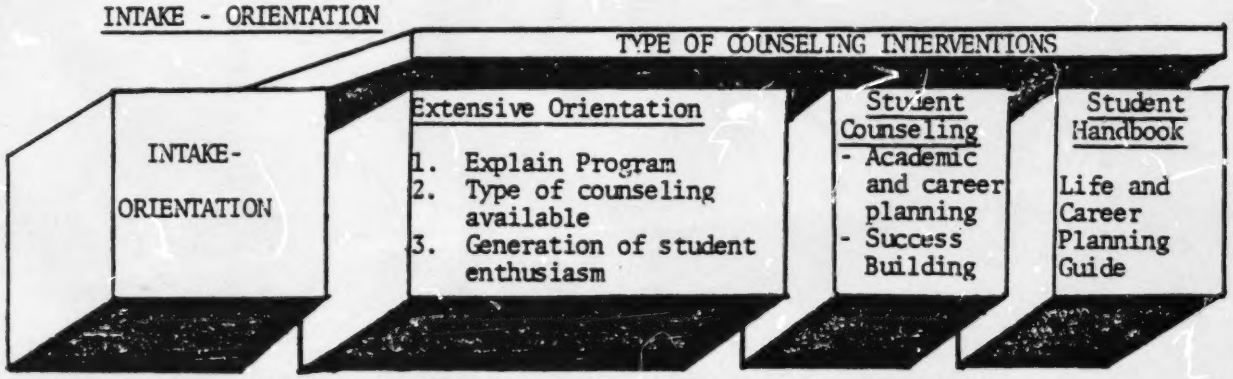
4. Pre-Post Student Disengagement
5. Innovative Functions of the Counselor/Helper/Advisor

Specific counseling suggestions are presented in each of the above components. Most of these suggestions for counseling activities may be viewed in a process ranging from:

Reactive Counseling ⟶ Proactive-Outreach Counseling

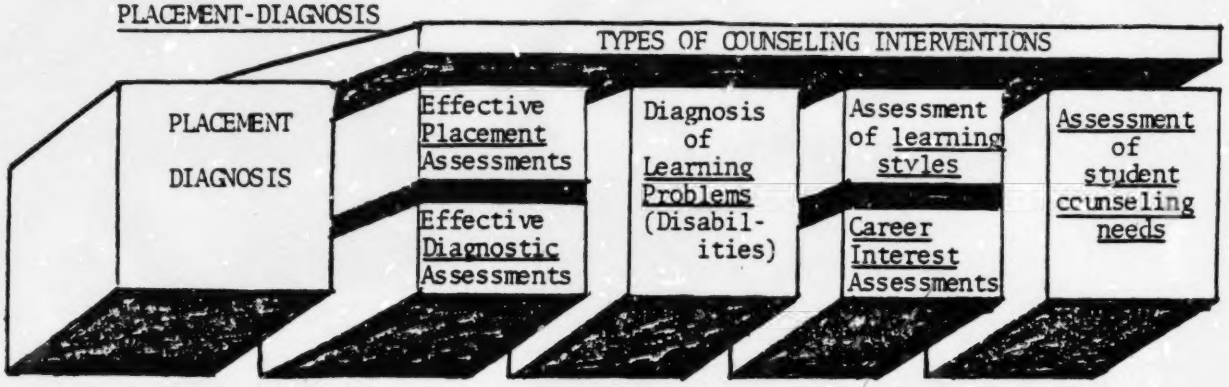
In reactive counseling, a counselor waits until approached by a student with a problem. In proactive-outreach counseling, the counselor/teacher/helper expands counseling services to students by teaching developmental counseling courses and distributing counseling information to students. Implications for implementation are also presented in terms of local adult education program suggestions.

Appendix A, (pg. 6), Student Services/Counseling Model for Adults graphically illustrates specific aspects of this model. Appendix B, (pg. 7), outlines the components of the model. Appendix C, (pg. 9) Counseling/Student Services Skills Needs Assessment, provides one with a format to assess the need for training in counseling/student services skills.



An effective intake-orientation procedure is an important part of providing counseling services to adults. The explanation of all aspects of the program including the availability of counseling services may help reduce student anxiety about returning to school. These general orientation procedures as well as the discussion of student fears may help in the retaining of students. Some ABE programs believe that these student orientation procedures are so important that they do not begin testing or instruction until they feel that students are ready-usually after a few hours of orientation/group counseling. The generation of student enthusiasm about the program begins here as well as academic and career planning. An approach to preventative counseling involves the distribution of a student handbook which includes relevant school information, counseling information and procedures for career and life planning. This handbook would help those students who are interested in exploring career options, for example. The Intake-Orientation procedures may overlap the Placement/Diagnosis procedures.

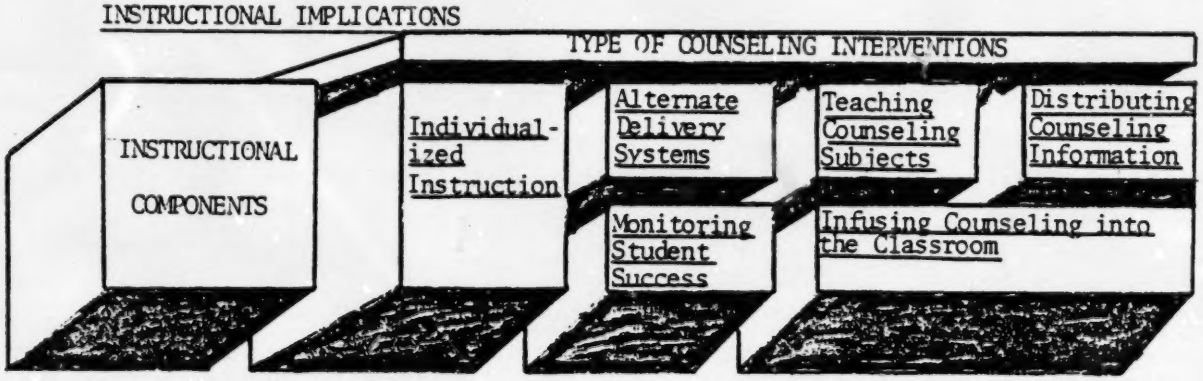
PLACEMENT-DIAGNOSIS



When effective placement devices are administered, students may be placed in appropriate classes. Effective diagnostic procedures will identify what skills and knowledge areas a student is proficient in. Students could then spend a majority of instructional time working on areas that they have not mastered. The diagnosis of learning problems (disabilities) is an important component of an effective placement-diagnosis effort.

Diagnosis should not be limited to assessment of skills. One should assess other counseling issues. One should assess the learning style of students to determine what type of instruction is most appropriate. One should also assess the career interests of students. In order to provide more comprehensive counseling services it is important to assess the counseling needs of students by individual discussions, needs assessment surveys, etc. The assessment of any skill or knowledge area, however, should be on a periodic basis and involve rechecking and verification by the student.

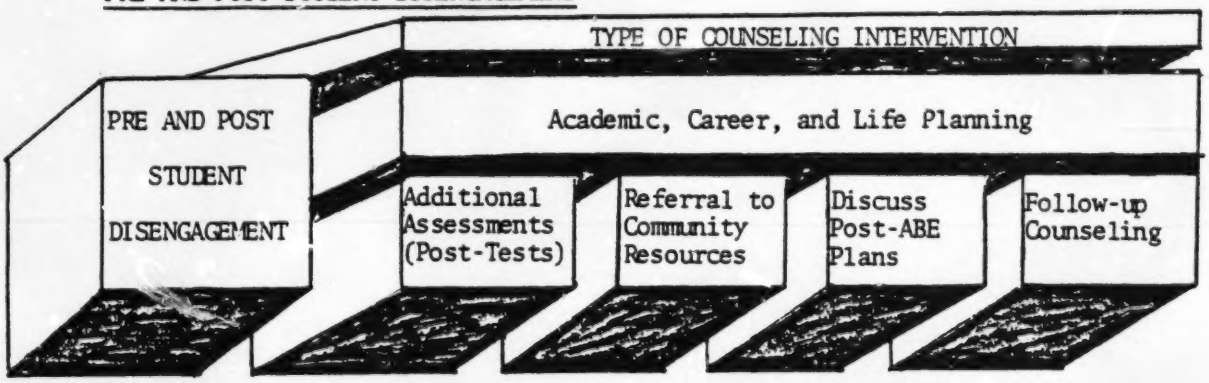
INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS



An emphasis on individualized (and small group) instruction follows from the use of effective diagnostic assessments. Competency-based instruction would allow students to study those areas which they have not mastered. Individualized education plans for students could be developed based on diagnostic information. Alternative instructional delivery systems, such as home-based instruction, may meet the needs of many students. By monitoring student success, teachers and counselors could show students how they are progressing.

An innovative counseling approach would include the teacher or counselor teaching developmental counseling courses based on the special needs of adults (i.e. Career development, low self-esteem, personal growth, marriage workshops). Appendix D contains a list of Adult Life Cycle Tasks and Adult Education Program Response. Another innovative approach to counseling would also include the infusion of counseling into the classroom and community. For example, one could teach reading with counseling material such as values clarification exercises, career education information or adult life cycle information. By distributing counseling information to students, a teacher or counselor takes a preventative approach to counseling. Throughout the entire instructional process a student's self-confidence should be built up.

PRE AND POST STUDENT DISENGAGEMENT



It is often the case that an adult education student may go through an adult education program without any help in planning future activities. This model encourages the development of procedures to facilitate academic, career and personal planning of adult students. These counseling procedures would occur throughout the program, before a student leaves the program and after a student completes a program or classes. Various student assessments and referrals may be included in this portion of the model. Many programs obtain information on student progress by pre-testing and post-testing. The communication to students of their progress often helps increase a student's self-confidence. By administering a simulated GED exam to students interested in obtaining their High School Equivalency Diploma, adult education staff may help reduce student anxiety and tell people how well they would do on the real GED. A student may need to be referred to other resources in the community for additional counseling and services. Follow-up counseling will help with retention and with reaching out to adults.

This model encourages the counselor to discuss future plans and opportunities with students throughout the entire adult basic education program or course. Students should especially have the opportunity to discuss future plans before and after they finish the high school equivalency or diploma course.

INNOVATIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNSELOR/HELPER/ADVISOR

The adult counselor should be a student-oriented guidance specialist/broker who helps students meet their educational and vocational goals. The adult counselor should help students assess their needs, abilities and aptitudes; help to clarify alternatives, and encourage the educational, vocational and personal development of students.

An adult counselor/helper/advisor should help to coordinate adult counseling services as an integral part of the total adult education program by means of the following functions:

1. Assessor of student skills
2. Academic, vocational and career planner
3. Individual and group counselor
4. Developer/Teacher/Coordinator of lectures/courses/seminars relating to the developmental counseling needs of adults
5. Disseminator of counseling information
6. Student advocate-"encourager"
7. Coordinator of counseling instructional infusion
8. Assessor of counseling needs of students
9. Developer of community resource counseling contacts

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY IMPLICATIONS

1. Develop more extensive and varied counseling services

This counseling model stresses the importance of developing program formats which are more sensitive to the needs of students. Extensive counseling services in the following areas may help provide more effective student services:

a. Effective Orientation Procedures

b. Effective Placement and Diagnosis Assessments

c. Varied Instructional Components

- Individualizing Instruction
- Teaching of courses relating to counseling needs or developmental tasks of adults

d. Academic, Career and Life Planning

Counseling services need to be an integral part of ABE programs.

2. Restructure Staff Responsibilities

A coordinated counseling approach among all staff will help provide effective counseling services to adults. It is important for counselors to be involved in counseling activities instead of many administrative or record keeping functions. The use of paraprofessionals for some of these functions may help. By using volunteers or counseling interns from graduate school, a program may extend one's counseling/support services. Teachers, counselors or other resource people may teach developmental counseling courses to meet some of the concerns of students.

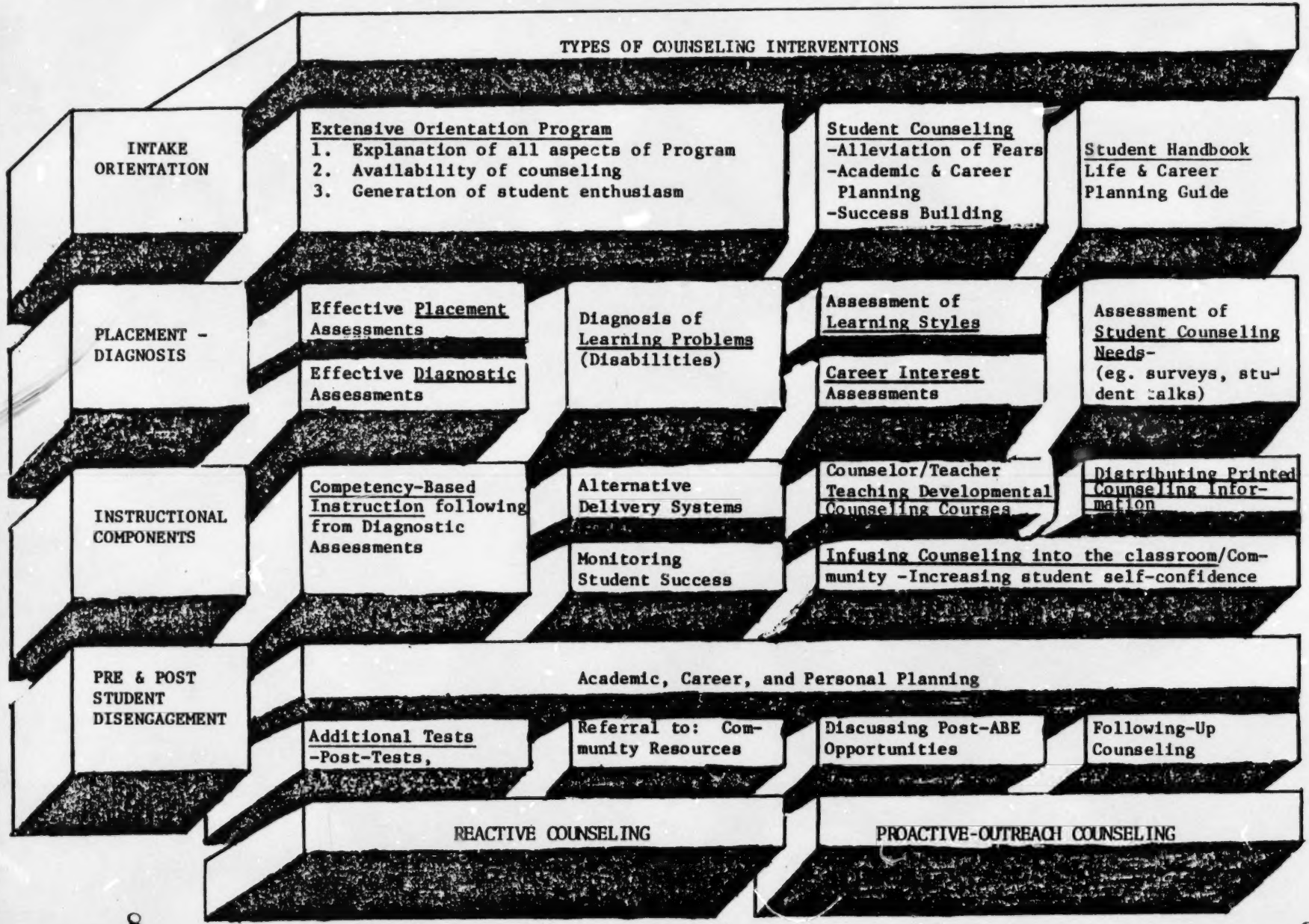
3. Provide student support services by coordination with other agencies

Many adult education programs do not have the staff and resources to provide comprehensive student services by themselves. However, by coordinating services with community resource agencies various counseling services could be provided.

For Additional Information On The Outreach Potential In Counseling;

Drum, David J. and Figler, Howard E. Outreach In Counseling. Cranston, Rhode Island: Carroll Press, 1973

STUDENT SERVICES / COUNSELING MODEL FOR ADULTS



APPENDIX A

A. MODEL COMPONENTS

1. Intake-Orientation
   a. Explanation of program
   b. Availability of counseling services
   c. Reduce student anxiety
   d. Discuss student fears
   e. Generate student enthusiasm
   f. Academic & Career planning
   g. Distributing student handbook - A Life and Career Planning Guide

2. Placement-Diagnosis
   a. Effective placement assessments
   b. Effective diagnosis assessments
   c. Diagnosing learning problems
   d. Career interest assessments
   e. Assessment of learning styles
   f. Assessment of student counseling needs

3. Instructional Implications
   a. Individualized instruction
   b. Competency-based instruction
   c. Development of individualized educational plans
   d. Alternative delivery systems
   e. Monitoring student success
   f. Counselor/Teacher teaching developmental counseling courses.
   g. Infusing counseling into the classroom/community
   h. Distributing printed information on counseling topics
   i. Building students's self-confidence

4. Pre & Post Student Disengagement
   a. Academic, career and personal planning
   b. Referral to community resources
   c. Discussing post - ABE plans
   d. Follow-up counseling

5. Innovative Functions of the Counselor/Helper/Advisor
   a. Assessor of student skills
   b. Academic, vocational and career planner
   c. Individual and group counselor
   d. Developer/Teacher/Coordinator of lectures/courses/seminars relating to the developmental counseling needs of adults
   e. Disseminator of counseling information
   f. Student advocate - "encourager"
   g. Coordinator of counseling instructional infusion
   h. Assessor of counseling needs of students
   i. Developer of community resource counseling contacts

B. IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Local Education Agency Implications

a. Develop more extensive and varied counseling services in the following areas:

- Orientation procedures
- Placement and diagnosis assessments
- Instructional components
  - Individualized instruction, competency-based instruction, teaching of courses related to counseling needs or developmental tasks of adults
- Academic, career and life planning

b. Restructure staff responsibilities

- Develop coordinated counseling approach among all staff
- Counselors should do counseling
- Use paraprofessionals for paperwork and other functions
- Use counseling interns/volunteers

c. Provide student support services by coordination with other agencies

APPENDIX C

COUNSELING/STUDENT SERVICES SKILLS

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Please fill out the following by checking (✓) the appropriate box in the area that you would like to have additional training in or information on:

Counseling/Student Services Skills	Need				
	STRONG NEED	MODERATE NEED	WEAK NEED	NO NEED	
1. PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT SERVICES					
a. skills in designing extensive and varied counseling services including personal, career and community counseling; effective orientation and diagnostic procedures; designing instructional counseling materials; academic, career and life planning, and evaluation of counselor effectiveness.					
b. skills in restructuring staff responsibilities including alternative counseling delivery systems, varied counseling roles, i.e. -- consulting, and in-service training of staff in counseling topics.					
c. skills in providing support services by coordination with other agencies.					
2. EXTENSIVE DIAGNOSIS-PLACEMENT PROCEDURES					
a. skills in using and knowledge about various literacy, achievement, and other assessment devices.					
b. skills in diagnosing learning problems (disabilities).					
c. skills in assessing learning styles of individuals.					
d. skills in needs assessment techniques including assessment of counseling needs of students.					
3. INFUSING COUNSELING INTO THE CLASSROOM					
a. skills in individualizing instruction					
b. skills in monitoring student success					

COUNSELING/STUDENT SERVICES SKILLS

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Please fill out the following by checking (✓) the appropriate box in the area that you would like to have additional training in or information on:

Counseling/Student Services Skills	Need			
	STRONG NEED	MODERATE NEED	WEAK NEED	NO NEED
c. skills in teaching developmental counseling courses based on the special life-cycle needs of adults (personal growth, low-self esteem, marriage workshops).				
d. skills in teaching reading by using counseling material such as values clarification, and career education information.				
e. skills in disseminating counseling information to students.				
4. ACADEMIC/LIFE/WORK PLANNING a. skills in implementing career guidance for adults including, but not limited to, special skills in counseling adults; student assessment skills; selecting relevant career materials; choosing effective strategies for program implementation.				
b. knowledge about the life/work planning process.				
c. ability to encorporate life/work planning activities into the classroom.				
d. skills in teaching decision-making.				
e. skills in exploring career alternatives.				
f. skills in communicating innovative job-seeking skills.				
5. HELPING SKILLS/INTERPERSONAL EXPERTISE A. Personal Expertise to Increase One's Own Effectiveness. a. knowledge of the counseling process.				
b. skills in attending including active listening; minimal encourages; non-verbal communication; paraphrasing; reflecting of feelings; and empathy training.				

COUNSELING/STUDENT SERVICES SKILLS

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Please fill out the following by checking (✓) the appropriate box in the area that you would like to have additional training in or information on:

Counseling/Student Services Skills	Need			
	STRONG NEED	MODERATE NEED	WEAK NEED	NO NEED
c. skills in interviewing.				
d. ability to deal with various emotions and crisis.				
e. ability to use assertiveness behavior techniques and skills				
f. ability to follow up on students.				
g. knowledge of the psychology of the adult learner.				
h. knowledge of and the ability to plan goal-setting activities.				
i. knowledge of counseling theories and own orientation.				
B. Expertise To Work With Small Groups a. skills and abilities in providing effective group counseling experiences including group processing techniques; coping with pressure; knowledge of group dynamics; role playing techniques.				
B. knowledge and ability to deal with controversy in social and interpersonal crisis.				